

July 11, 2002

Marlene H. Dortch  
Secretary  
Office of the Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW, CY-B402  
Washington, DC 20554

**Re: WC Docket No. 02-150**  
**Application by the BellSouth Corporation for Authorization Under Section 271 of the**  
**Communications Act to Provide In-Region, Interlata Services in the States of Alabama,**  
**Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina and South Carolina**

Dear Ms. Dortch:

The Community Action Partnership (CAP) is pleased to submit the following comments in support of BellSouth's application to provide In-Region, Interlata Service in Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina and South Carolina. The Community Action Partnership serves as a national forum for policy on poverty and to strengthen, promote, represent and serve its network of member agencies to assure that the issues of the poor are effectively heard and addressed. NACAA advances the economic condition, educational attainment, political influence, health and civil rights of low-income Americans through community-based programs operating at more than 900 Community Action Agencies nationwide. It is CAP's mission to ensure that low-income Americans are not left behind.

CAP believes that BellSouth's entrance into the long-distance market in Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina and South Carolina will provide numerous benefits to these communities, including choice, competition and affordability. Additionally, BellSouth's entrance into these markets will encourage accelerated deployment of advanced telecommunications capabilities needed to improve the quality of life. Furthermore, CAP believes that rapid deployment of a fully competitive marketplace will ensure that all consumers will have affordable access to modern telecommunications products and services.

CAP is committed to making sure that all consumers--especially low-income consumers--have access to affordable materials, services and products, including telecommunication services. BellSouth's entry into these five markets could allow customers to see long distance prices drop between 20 to 30 percent. Given the growing use and cost of telecommunications services market competition and consumer choice is necessary. Expanded competition means more affordable telecommunication services and a wider array of products and packages for all residents. Affordable access to the Internet from homes and community centers are also important to the community.

Allowing BellSouth to offer long distance service is the only way that most residential customers will realize the benefits of competition for local service. If BellSouth is allowed to offer long distance service to all residential customers, then competitor long distance companies will be forced to meet that competition by offering local service or risk losing their residential customer service base.

CAP believes that BellSouth's entrance into the Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina and South Carolina long distance market will be beneficial to all residents. The public service commissions in Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina and South Carolina have concluded that BellSouth has met the 14-point checklist as mandated by the Telecommunications Act of 1996; therefore, CAP urges the FCC to approve the application by BellSouth.

Sincerely,

//s//

Derrick Span

Executive Director

Community Action Partnership

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